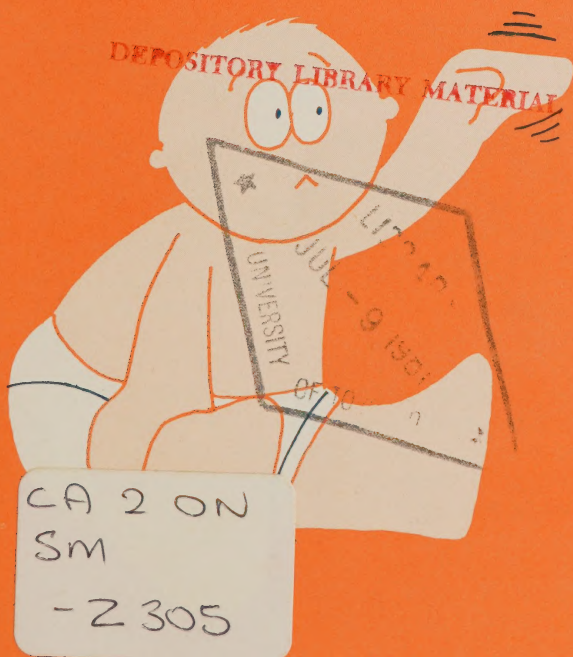


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# What about me?

parents need  
time off too!



## **Full-time parents need time off too**

Those who chose to be a full-time parent/homemaker know it is a full-time job. But everyone needs a break. And just as you will benefit from 'time off', your children will probably enjoy a break from the regular at-home-with-mother routine.

Time to yourself, to pursue a personal interest or just to think in peace, is important to you and to your family. Children don't want, need or benefit from having their mother or father constantly present. New situations, from an early age, provide your children with new learning experiences. Such change also helps children gain confidence in other adults and prepares them for the time when you can't be there.

A break from routine will help you to be more relaxed and happy with your life — and may give you a fresh start on a hectic week.

(Although this pamphlet is mainly directed at mothers in the home, the suggestions are also useful for mothers and fathers with jobs outside the home.)

## **Where to Start**

There's no point feeling exhausted or fed up with your life. If you want a regular break from routine, or even an occasional one, start to plan now.

Consider what you do with the time when your children are napping. Rather than rushing about, cleaning, why not read, soak in the bathtub or take a nap? Life usually looks better when you're relaxed and refreshed.

Other points to consider in your daily routine:

Household chores are *never* done. Make up your mind to that. You will never have the same leisure time as you did before the children came. Try to cut down on unnecessary household tasks. Let the dishes drain; plan simple meals. Try to find 'a place for everything and everything in its place.' Once you have a system, housekeeping becomes easier.

Frequent walks with your children provide a break from care of the house. Consider:

- a walk around the block or to the park for fresh air and leisure time with your children;
- visit a neighbor with children so that you have adult companionship while the children play together;
- enroll in a community program for mothers and children — such as swimming or crafts;
- sometimes a walk by yourself in the evening is a great refresher;
- start a hobby you can do while housebound such as refinishing furniture, baking, sewing and other crafts;
- consider visiting a local library where children can join in a story hour while you browse.

Here are some ideas to help you arrange for regular time off:

1. Arrange with another parent in your neighborhood to exchange child-care, perhaps one afternoon a week each. If you're new in the area or don't know any parents in similar situations, contact your local recreation department, church or public health nurse for help.

2. You may discover, through one of these, that there is a child-care co-op in your area. This type of arrangement usually means that several mothers take their infants and toddlers to a central place for a few hours a week. While two or three mothers care for the children, the others are free to relax. You may welcome the chance to discuss your experiences or problems with other mothers. It's often helpful to find you're not the only one on the block whose child has toilet-training or sleeping problems. Or you may wish to get off by yourself for awhile.

3. In many areas special programs or courses can be combined with child-care. Try the following resources to see what they offer:

YM/YWCA, YM/YWHA  
Community Centre  
Recreation Department of  
your Municipality  
Public Library  
School Board  
Community College

Such child-care facilities are usually well equipped and are often available free or at a nominal fee.

4. Other resources to check include your church or synagogue and bulletin boards in your local shopping centre or laundromat. There may be child-care facilities designed to keep your child happy for a few hours while you shop or bowl.

Consider all the possibilities and look into them.



## **What About Dad?**

Fathers vary widely in their ability to be comfortable in the homemaking role. You will have to govern yourself accordingly as to how much encouragement and/or instruction your husband needs.

It is good for both dad and the children to spend some time together playing, reading and getting to know each other better. And many dads find they really enjoy it.

Discuss with your husband your desire and need to have time away from the children and household duties. Try to make arrangements which suit you both. For example, he may prefer to spend Saturday afternoons in this role, rather than assume it after work.

If you're spending such 'time off' elsewhere in the house, be sure the children understand that dad is in charge.

## **Teach Your Children to Help**

Children can learn and enjoy, from an early age, to help you. Young ones can pick up their toys and clothes, even make a bed. It may not be perfect, but with practice they'll learn.

As they get older get them involved in drying the dishes, sorting the laundry, vacuuming and helping you prepare meals.

Assign tasks that your children can handle. When possible, let them choose the ones they prefer. It can be made into a game rather than a chore. And remember that it won't be done perfectly. Try to enjoy what they do accomplish. They'll need encouragement and guidance — don't give up because "it's easier to do it myself" — they'll learn.

If your children are already older and you haven't yet involved them — let them know that a new era has arrived. It's never too late for them to learn. Make it clear that you expect jobs to be well done, and let them know how pleased you are when this is accomplished.

## Start Today

Think about yourself and what you'd like to do with some free time. Perhaps jot down a few ideas or goals.

Why not call one of the organizations mentioned in this pamphlet or others you've heard about? Make a list of what they have to offer you, the days and hours of operation and the cost. Then compare this list with your list of goals. Planning is essential for success in your time-for-mother project.

Initially you may simply want time to walk or to read or to learn to macrame; but who knows, by this time next year you may want to start a course in chemistry.

It's your life and you can't spend it entirely on child-rearing. Children do grow up and leave home. And you have a lot of living to do once they're on their own. Start now to get yourself involved in other activities.

It's not selfish to think of yourself. Don't feel guilty about letting yourself come first some of the time. When you're rested and feel good, the whole family feels good too. An interesting mother is a wonderful model for young children.

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